A

SECOND LETTER

TO

Mr. GEORGE MAXWELL.

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A

SECOND LETTER

FROM

The Rev. JAMES ASHLEY,

RECTOR OF FLEET,

TO

Mr. GEORGE MAXWELL;

IN REPLY TO

His Anonymous Epistle

TO

BLANK BLANK, *Esquire.*

Wisbech:
PRINTED BY JOHN WHITE.

And to be had GRATIS *of the Printer;—the Rectory at Fleet;—and the King's Head in Spalding.*

1797.

To Mr. GEORGE MAXWELL.

SIR,

WHEN I firſt ſaw your anonymous traſh, I thought, with the generality of your readers, that it was altogether unworthy any anſwer.——I think ſo ſtill, and always ſhall think ſo; and, therefore, fully intended not to honor it with any other reply, than the ſhort Note that immediately followed its publication.——The opinion of ſome reſpectable friends, to whoſe judgment I always willingly ſubmit my own, has rather altered my intentions.——They contend, "That, as you have "written in your *own perſon*, (though in the true ſpirit "of blundering, you have aſſumed a *falſe ſignature*) "and have adopted the paltry affectation of ſheltering "yourſelf behind a kind of *Iriſh ſcreen*, that does not, "nor was even intended to conceal you: it may poſſibly "be conſidered by ſome readers (however contemptibly "they muſt think of it in other reſpects) that it cannot "be called entirely anonymous; and, therefore, that "it ought to be replied to."

Though I am far from being convinced by the reaſoning, yet I readily yield to the reſpectable authority of this opinion.——The ſenſible and ſagacious CASIMIR has long ſince confirmed me in thinking, that there is a dignity in ſilence, when thus illiberally aſſailed by ſuch an adverſary as Mr. Maxwell.

" Eſt et loquacis pulchra Proterviæ
" Vindicta riſiſſe, et ſereno
" Magnanimum tacuiſſe Vultu."——CAS.

But my friends think differently, and I ſubmit.——

I ſhall, however, ſo far follow my firſt intentions, as to decline addreſſing you behind the *ſkreen of glaſs* you are pleaſed to place before you.——I will not write to a *forged ſignature;* I leave that to minds liberal as your own.—It is Mr. GEORGE MAXWELL that has greatly injured me.—It is Mr. GEORGE MAXWELL that has groſsly inſulted me.—It is Mr. GEORGE MAXWELL, therefore, to whom I addreſſed myſelf.—It is Mr. GEORGE MAXWELL from whom I challenged, and expected an anſwer.—And it is to Mr. GEORE MAXWELL only that I will reply.—Stand forth, therefore, Mr. GEORGE MAXWELL, whilſt I take your wretched ribaldry paragraph by paragraph, detect its numerous falſities, and expoſe its ſophiſtry, in a manner that, if you are not grown ſo callous as to have loſt the very power of bluſhing, ſhall make you completely aſhamed of having written it*.——If " all the ſplendor of your " vaſt

* Some few years ago, before I knew Mr. *George Maxwell* ſo well as I do now, I heard, in a converſation reſpecting him, the

" vaſt abilities " could not enable you to produce ſomething a little more like an anſwer—why, alas! did you publiſh any thing? Why not ſuffer thoſe great abilities for once to lie dormant, rather than call them into action to ſhew the weakneſs of your caſe, in eighteen pages of wretched rubbiſh; unworthy not only of a man, a ſcholar, and a gentleman; but alſo diſgraceful even to you as a writer!

As I have undertaken the unpleaſant taſk, I will not paſs by any part of your ribaldry. I begin therefore with your title page: in the firſt words of which, you honor me with the nickname of " THE LAW-PRIEST."

Your former miſerable attempts at wit, when you laboured to affix nicknames to gentlemen much my ſuperiors, were diſtinguiſhed by a total want of ſenſe and vacuity of meaning.——Your preſent poor attempt at being witty, degenerates into abſoulute and contradictory nonſenſe.——*Law-prieſt* is compounded of two words incongruous in their meaning, and incompatible in their application; they cannot aſſimilate, and when

the following ſhort *entretien*, between three gentlemen at Spalding: who, though I have not their authority to mention their names, will not, I am ſure, wiſh to conceal them, or deny the Dialogue.

1*ſt Gent.*—" I would give a crown to ſee *Maxwell* ſmile! "

2*d Gent.*—" And I would give another to ſee him bluſh!! "

3*d Gent.*—" Give me the ten ſhillings, gentlemen, and I will " repay you each ten pounds, if ever he is known to ſmile " from good nature, or to bluſh from ſhame!!! "

compounded

compounded, ſo far from conveying any meaning, they only imply a jargon, a contradiction of terms, and inexplicable nonſenſe.——Before the reformation ſuch a term might have been forced into ſomething like application; but let me aſk you, how many centuries is it ſince that was impoſſible?——I beg your pardon! I do not wiſh to puzzle you. It is probable you may be juſt as accurate an hiſtorian as you have ſhewn yourſelf to be a ſound lawyer!——

The appellation of *Law-prieſt*, therefore, if it meant any thing, was intended to remind the public, that I have filled two ſituations in life, both of them reſpectable, and one of them honorable in the higheſt degree. For this I again heartily thank you; ſince you have blindly and unwittingly coupled it with this ſtriking circumſtance, that even the malice of a Maxwell was not able to ſtate one proof of my having ever done any thing to diſcredit either of thoſe ſituations.——That you had every diſpoſition to do ſo, if in your power, is evident from what you have formerly falſely ſaid about "*pleadings of my own;*" and what you now as falſely ſay about "*my ſtealing a march upon my pariſhioners:*" of which more in its place.

If, Sir, I have filled two delicate and trying ſituations in life, for nearly twenty years in each, without leaving one blot for malice to aim its envenomed ſhafts at: I ſay, with pride and pleaſure, this is more than *negative*, it is *poſitive* praiſe.——The good ſenſe of mankind well knows, that, on ſuch occaſions, the ſilence of rancour

and

and malevolence is real panegyric.——Moſt juſtly true are the words of the Poet:—

" Honor and ſhame from no condition riſe,
" Act well your part, there all the honor lies."

You, Sir, if I am not much miſinformed, have alſo been in *many* ſituations in life: whether with unimpeachable, unbroken, unblameable credit, is not for me but the public to determine.——

I will hereafter notice the other *liberal* parts of your *elegant title page*. At preſent, I am impatient to pay my reſpects to the nonſenſe and falſity that adorn every page of the context.——The firſt of thoſe falſities I find, where I ſhould naturally look for it, in the firſt paragraph, and almoſt in the firſt line. You there charge me with having written you an anonymous letter; upon which you, and your facetious friend BLANK BLANK, *Eſquire*, have ſo ſolemnly pronounced judgment.—— I can only ſay, ſir, that you know this charge to be an impudent and infamous calumny.——You know I never wrote you any ſuch letter.——If I did, the proof is eaſy: PRODUCE IT—print a *copy* of it, and leave the *original* with your printer.——If thus called upon, you neglect to do ſo, the impartial will determine, whether you do not ſit down contentedly a ſelf-convicted, ſelf-condemned, falſe calumniator?——

In this reſpect, you are playing off upon me the ſame trick you ſerved Mr. Hartley.——When you found that all

all your rancour, and ſcurrility towards him, failed to effect the vengeful purpoſe; you pretended to have received a letter about him: let us take your own elegant words, for none other can do you juſtice —— "*Huſh!—I have a letter in my pocket, that will throw ſome* "*light on this maxim.*"——This letter was to prove terrible things againſt him; and you went ſo far as to affect to read the horrid, and ſhocking contents of this pretended letter, in private companies, till ſome of your hearers almoſt began to think there muſt be ſome truth in the matter: but when fairly, openly, and honeſtly called upon to produce "*the letter you had in your* "*pocket;*" you ſaved yourſelf the trouble of doing ſo in that caſe, as you will alſo do in this, for the beſt reaſon in the world; becauſe no ſuch letter was ever written!——For the further developement of this kind, candid, *honorable* tranſaction, I muſt refer to the pamphlets on the ſubject; and particularly to Mr. Hartley's excellent, and admirably written letter to you.——Your preſent groſs and illiberal charge againſt him of forgery; now he is abſent, and cannot defend himſelf; is as cowardly, and I am informed, as falſe, as the reſt of your cruel and malignant conduct towards him.——

But what could poſſibly induce you to ſay, that "*according to my account he is dead?*"——This is a wanton, unneceſſary, *gratis* falſity: I never ſaid, or wrote any ſuch thing, for ſuch an idea never came into my imagination.——I never knew him, nor do I now know whether he be ſtill in exiſtence or not: and I might probably never have heard of his very name, but from your

your cruel unfeeling malignancy towards him, and the admirable manner in which he refuted your calumnies.——

If I felt any part of that rancour that actuates your conduct towards me, I might fully gratify it by reprinting your precious letters, and the admirable manner in which Mr. Hartley has anſwered them, and ſummed up the long catalogue of your virtues and good qualities, in his excellently written letter to you.——This would long ſince have been done, by ſome of your *numerous friends*, but that they are well convinced it is impoſſible for any thing to make Mr. Maxwell MORE BELOVED in his neighbourhood than he is.——

I cannot help mentioning here, that a gentleman, whoſe name I need not repeat to you, upon my requeſting the peruſal of your printed letters, of which he has a collection, made me this remarkable anſwer.—— "You muſt excuſe me! I will readily lend you all the "pamphlets written againſt him; but, though I do not "like the man (and who indeed does?) yet I am not ſo "much his enemy, as to ſhew you his *own* letters, and "ſo republiſh his ſelf-condemnation.——He muſt long "ſince have repented of writing them; and, now he is "rich and opulent, would undoubtedly be glad to buy "them in at any price."——

That the gentleman was clearly miſtaken as to your ſuppoſed repentance and remorſe, is evident from the manner in which you ſtill ſpeak of theſe *precious morſels of ſcurrility!*——You are pleaſed to dignify them with

the title of "*a former paper war.*"——They deſerve no ſuch appellation, for they are a mere maſſacre of the good characters of men, more honored and diſtinguiſhed by their virtues and excellencies, than even by their eminent and very reſpectable ſituations in life.——But you do not ſtop here, you are hardy and impudent enough to ſay, that you was only writing to defend yourſelf againſt the attacks of theſe reſpectable men.—— I appeal to thoſe who have ſeen the letters, I appeal to the correſpondence itſelf, to prove, that at the beginning, and in every ſtage of it, you was the ſole and entire aggreſſor: nothing illiberal appears, but what iſſues from your pen of gall in the firſt inſtance, or is unavoidably provoked by it.——

I would gladly paſs by the curious manner in which you attempt to gloſs over the diabolical uſe you made of the reverend and reſpected name of an ancient and venerable clergyman, and worthy magiſtrate, your neighbour.——Oh! Mr. GEORGE MAXWELL! Mr. GEORGE MAXWELL!——Bluſh if you can bluſh!—— And if you can pray, pray moſt fervently, that the paragraph alluded to, may never more be read by any man that knows you. You are ſecure from its ever being *quoted;* for I think even your virtuous friend Mr. P—t—k himſelf, if he were living, could not copy it without bluſhing.

You exultingly ſay, "That I had, or pretended to "have, a good opinion of you, long after you had "ſhewn repeated inſtances of a depraved mind,"

(theſe

(theſe are your own words, Mr. Maxwell, and not mine) in theſe vilifying letters, I am now reprobating. ——Do not flatter yourſelf ſo egregiouſly.——Let me undeceive you. The opinion you ſo eagerly catch at, applied to your *profeſſion*, and not your *principles*: ſo far from thinking well of either of them, *after* I had ſeen and read the whole of thoſe abominable letters, I can ſafely defy any man, poſſeſſed of a grain of honor or ſenſibility, after reading them, to think of you but with pity and contempt, mixed with a juſt portion of honeſt indignation.——

You ſay that you never before had occaſion to notice me in writing; and you inſinuate, that you never was in the habit of publiſhing Reports on me and my property. The moſt effectual way of confuting falſity is by plainly ſtating the oppoſite facts.——Let us ſee then how this matter ſtands.———On the 12th December 1793, you produced a Report of *your own writing*, and read it at a *public meeting* at Spalding: It contained your eſtimate of the Tythes of Fleet, *my property*, which had been referred to you to appreciate: that eſtimate as I have before ſtated, and am at all times prepared to prove, did not amount to nearly one half the value of the property referred to you to appreciate. You have never explained whether this capital blunder proceeded from miſtake or deſign; and, in a calculator ſo infallible as Mr. Maxwell, I dare not ſuppoſe it could proceed from miſtake.———On the 5th of November 1795, you printed and publiſhed another Report, in which (though you had no legal power to do ſo) yet as far as you

could, you attempted entirely to deprive me of part of thoſe tythes, of which you knew me to be the undoubted owner; and to ſhew that they were the property of others, who you was equally conſcious could have no juſt or legal claim to them.——Surely it is enough, *once in a long life*, for any man to do, or which is exactly the ſame thing, to attempt to do to another, ſuch capital injuries as theſe.——With you it ſeems, that twice in leſs than two years was not ſufficient, for you now confidently ſay, you never noticed me in writing before, nor was in the habit of publiſhing Reports on me and my property.——If, Sir, your habits lead you to do ſuch things oftener than once a year—if ſuch be the nature of theſe habits when they are upon you; I can only ſay, that I pity you, if poſſible, more than I deſpiſe you.——

Both the above diſgraceful buſineſſes I have twice before ſtated in print; and called upon you to anſwer, to confute, or deny them.——You have not anſwered, you have not confuted, you have not denied, you have not attempted with your uſual art and fineſſe, even to explain away theſe ſtubborn facts.——The impartial will form their own concluſions.

I feel myſelf much more diſpoſed heartily to laugh at, than ſeriouſly to anſwer, the wretched, contemptible, and ludicrous manner in which (you have indeed the grace to own "*with extreme reluctance*") you attempt to ſlubber over a ſolemn declaration, deliberately made, and as deliberately broken.——At firſt it is pretended that I have given a mutilated account of this "*compact with*

"*the*

" *the public,*" as you are pleaſed to call it; for you ſorely wince at the tenor of your own expreſſion, and cautiouſly avoid repeating the words " ſolemn de- " claration."——Unluckily this pretended " *mutilated* " *account* " is copied *verbatim et literatim* from your own publication; I have quoted it ſo faithfully, that I have even copied your grammatical blunders.——Neither the Public nor I had any thing to do with your motives for making this " ſolemn declaration:" there it ſtands; not as you would now wiſh meanly to inſinuate, a partial renunciation of any one particular appointment, or ſituation; but an abſolute abjuration of " *every other* " *ſituation on earth* " in favor of that you then reſided at.——The words are as general, yet as poſitive and abſolute as language can furniſh.——" *I here ſolemnly* " *declare, that no temptation upon earth ſhould ever induce* " *me to quit the ſituation I am in.*"——You then pro- ceed to add your reaſons for making this ſolemn declaration, viz. " becauſe that *ſituation is peculiarly* " *adapted to my convenience:—my habits of life:—the* " *education of my children:—my family connexions:—and my* " *regard for a few reſpectable acquaintance amongſt whom I* " *was born.*"——The very nature of theſe reaſons clearly apply, not to the renouncing a removal to one particular ſituation; they alike apply to all, and are ſtrictly adapted to your own general rejection of every temptation upon earth.——If theſe reaſons could operate ſufficiently to make you refuſe to remove from your beloved Fletton Lodge, to a moſt ſplendid appointment, and a reſidence in a ducal palace, at only *ſeven miles diſtance.*— A fortiori, they would have militated ſtill more effectually againſt

againſt your ſo ſoon afterwards migrating to Spalding, juſt *three times* that diſtance, to an appointment, and a ſituation, infinitely leſs tempting.——Your ſo readily graſping at the one ſituation, clearly ſhews how ſtoically and heroically you would have rejected the other, ſo much more alluring, ſo much more gratifying to your pride, if you could have obtained it*.——Ceaſe then, Sir, to bewilder the attention of your readers, and divert them from the fact, by dragging their thoughts, to "*London*"—to "*Edinburgh*"—

"*To Thebes, to Athens, and the Lord knows where.*"—

Let them confine their ideas to Thorney and Spalding. To the reſpective diſtances of thoſe Places from Fletton Lodge; and your *local* reaſons for not quitting that darling ſpot; and then let them form their own opinions about your "ſolemn declaration."——

* About this time, Mr. M. began to find that all his *elegant writing*, all his *liberal actions*, and all his *witty abuſe*, would not ſucceed in ſupplanting from a much envied ſituation, a gentleman who then did, ſtill does, and long may he continue to diſcharge the duties of that ſituation, in a manner that is an honor to himſelf, and a credit to human nature.——It is however, a melancholy truth, that Mr. M's. artful inſinuations have in many other caſes too well ſucceeded in removing from lucrative employments, gentlemen of undoubted honor and ability; and either ſupplying the vacancies himſelf, or filling them up with ſome of his relations, partners, or ſatellites.——

A liſt of ſome of theſe hard caſes, will ſhortly be given to the public, by a gentleman well acquainted with the facts; which will exhibit ſome curious anecdotes of Mr. M's *generoſity* and *gratitude*; ſo ſtriking, as ſtrongly to remind us of the fable of the half-expiring ſnake, ſtinging the friendly boſom that warmed, revived, and reanimated it.——

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In a word, Sir, after having "*ſolemnly declared*" that "*no temptation upon earth* ſhould ever induce you to quit "the ſituation you was in;" will you be ſo condeſcending as to inform us what there was of a "*heavenly*" nature that tempted you to migrate to Spalding; and, hawke-like, to pounce down on the trembling and frightened inhabitants of South Holland?——I can take the liberty truly to inform you, that they do not expect any *heavenly* effects from this *earthly viſitation:* and if they had any ſuch hopes, they would gladly reſign all thoſe heavenly proſpects, to get fairly rid of you, and ſend you back again to your dearly beloved Fletton Lodge.

I have promiſed to anſwer your traſh paragraph by paragraph; and I ſtill mean to do ſo. Though the virtues of your heart as a man, make the taſk unpleaſant; and the excellencies of your head as a writer, render it not a little difficult.——At page 10 of this immortal work, a paragraph begins, and is continued through nearly four cloſely printed pages.——This curious paragraph, evidently with a deſign to perplex the plaineſt poſition, is crouded with ſuch a ſenſeleſs unintelligible jargon of irrelative nonſenſe, about "Quantity of "Land;—— Money Payments;—— Proportions of "Land;——Graſs Tythe;——Wool;——Dame Dob-"bin's Poultry;——Stealing a March;——Grown "Gentlemen;——New Claims;——Cuſtomary Pay-"ments;——Preſcriptive Payments;——&c. &c. &c." ——all jumbled together in ſuch babelic confuſion, as to bid defiance to all connection, and leave but little chance

chance of being underſtood, or reduced to their primitive plainneſs.——Let us however endeavour to reſcue the plain meaning, from the mountain of rubbiſh under which you have laboured to bury it.——

In the year 1793, when it was in contemplation to exonerate the Pariſh of Fleet from tythes; equity and juſtice naturally ſuggeſted to the Proprietors, to give the poor parſon ſomething in return: and the ſame equity and juſtice as naturally whiſpered to them, that that ſomething ſhould be equivalent to what would be taken from him.——In making an eſtimate of this *uncertainty* to be given, in exchange for the *certainty* to be taken away; I ſubmit it to common ſenſe, that it muſt be intended the eſtimator ſhould take into his idea, the improvements then about to take place. This is ſo obvious to common ſenſe, and ſo conſonant with reaſon and equity, that I diſdain to inſiſt upon it.—— It is of no conſequence whether this *quid pro quo* was to conſiſt of "*Shares of Land*," or "*Money Payments:*" and your labouring to perplex the plaineſt meaning by ſuch deſpicable nonſenſe, is indeed a moſt miſerable ſhift.——In one word of plain ſenſe, the Rector was to have an equivalent. The value of his tythes muſt therefore be eſtimated; and the ſum expreſſed by the old faſhioned mode of pounds, ſhillings, and pence.—— This you accordingly did, or attempted to do in your manner.——Your report ſaid nothing about *proportions of land*, or *money payments;* but merely eſtimated the value of the tythe at a ſpecific ſum.——That ſum I tell you again, was not half equal to the value.——If this

ſtill

ſtill wanted proving, I could produce proof that I have lately been offered nearly double the ſum mentioned in your eſtimate (though none of the expected improvements have yet taken place, and perhaps never may) by a gentleman who underſtands this kind of property as well as any man in England.——

You ſeem mightily diſpleaſed that I did not allot to Mr. Hare a moiety of the merit of this curious calculation.——I will give my reaſons.—Mr. Hare was indeed mentioned with you in the reference, but as he neither ſigned the report, nor came forward when it was read, to defend it when objected to; I have no right to uſe his name where he has not uſed it himſelf.——On the contrary, I have reaſon to think, if he had taken any part in the calculation, the eſtimate would have been a very different one.——

As to what you ſay now about "*pleadings—new* "*claims*——and *ſtealing a march upon my pariſhioners.*" ——It is only neceſſary, in order to prove *your love of truth*, to remind you, that, as to the pleadings, the falſhood has been repeatedly proved, and once even to your teeth, till you *appeared* to be aſhamed of it.—— No *new claims* were ever made by me.——And *ſtealing a march upon my pariſhioners*, in your language, means my poſitively voting againſt the meaſure, that was to effect the dark purpoſe you ſo falſely and baſely hint at in the firſt inſtance; and ſoon after putting as poſitive a veto upon, and effectually ſtopping it in the ſecond.—— Such is Mr. Maxwell's idea of ſtealing a march!——

Oh! my friends—can you ſtill be tenacious of the opinion that occaſions me the irkſome taſk of anſwering ſuch a man! can you ſtill really think that ſuch a man deſerved a ſerious anſwer, or, in fact, any anſwer at all?——

Muſt I deſcend to the dull drudgery of noticing ſuch trumpery ſtuff, as your cavilling quibble about "*pariſhioners and proprietors.*"——Was it poſſible for any man to conceive I could, on ſuch an occaſion, be ſpeaking of pariſhioners who were *not* proprietors?—— Was it poſſible to ſuppoſe, that any pariſhioner who was not a proprietor alſo, would be at the trouble and expenſe of going more than ten miles from home, to attend a meeting in which he was not at all intereſted?——

Much idle and ridiculous parade is made about "Cuſtomary Payments," and "Preſcriptive Payments;" all which tends to prove nothing but your total ignorance of the very meaning of thoſe words.——After you have charged me not only with an anxiety to conceal thoſe cuſtomary payments, but alſo with a private and dark deſign to "ſteal a march," in order to annihilate them entirely; what can you ſay for yourſelf, or, what will the public ſay of you; when I *remind* you, and *inform* them, that, in the ſtatement I ſent you of my dues, theſe very "Cuſtomary Payments," as you are pleaſed to call them, are mentioned, and explained by their proper name of Compoſitions?——This ſtatement was openly read, at the meeting of the 12th of December, 1793, immediately before the reading of your

lame

lame and limping eſtimate: and the Proprietors fully admitted the correctneſs of my ſtatement.——You ſay it was not in your preſence; I tell you flatly it was in your preſence: it was in your *hearing*. I tell you more, that you afterwards recognized it yourſelf, in one of your elegant harangues the ſame day.——Still you pretend you do not believe it.—Mean, deſpicable quibbler!—You well know you never diſbelieved it.—You well know you do not now entertain the ſhadow of a doubt of its being true.——Oh! but you deny it, becauſe it is not in the minutes.——Nobody but an ideot would ſeriouſly expect to find it there.——Pray, Mr. George Maxwell, are all, or any of your elegant harangues entered into thoſe minutes?——If yes, ſurely they ought to be printed!——If no, how could you expect to find there the ſimple *approbatur* of the poor proprietors of Fleet?——If indeed they had objected to my ſtatement, it might have been neceſſary to notice the objections.——But a paper unanimouſly admitted to be right, needed not to be noticed in thoſe authentic and authoritative minutes.——It is really miſerably miſpending time, to condeſcend to confute ſuch contemptible cavils!——

But courage, reader!——a better proſpect opens to us.—Though unexpectedly, I have actually diſcovered, a line and a half of truth, amongſt this maſs of falſhood. ——The poet ſays very juſtly—

" A fool may ſay a witty thing by chance."

In like manner, a writer of Mr. Maxwell's deſcription may, without intending it, ſtumble on truth once in eighteen pages: this is actually the caſe, and though this prodigy is dropped in a note (becauſe it ſhould not diſgrace the context) he ſhall have the full credit of it. ——He there tells you, and he tells you truly, that I was almoſt forty years old when I became a member of the univerſity.——

——————" *Pudet hæc opprobria nobis,*
" *Et dici potuiſſe; et non potuiſſe refelli.*"

If, Mr. Maxwell, the univerſity be, as you are pleaſed to call it, a ſeminary for teaching grown gentlemen how to behave themſelves, it is highly expedient you ſhould immediately endeavour to get admittance, if poſſible.——I recommend it for the ſake of your friends as well as your enemies.——Though I underſtand you are nearly ſixty, let not that diſcourage you!——The adage ſays truly, and in this caſe *moſt* truly, " BETTER " LATE THAN NEVER!!! "——

Your being the arbitrary dictator of every man you act with (or you will not act at all) is a fact ſo notorious, that you do not attempt to deny it yourſelf——You ſay, " *Whatever I may hereafter write upon the ſubject, will* " *be under the ſanction of all the Commiſſioners.*" This plainly ſhews a conſciouſneſs, that you know they are aſhamed of what you have written now.——The falſity with which you wind up the ſentence, reflects no diſgrace upon them: for a falſhood can diſgrace none but the retailer

retailer of it.——Though *you* are not, nor ever will be, convinced that "abuſing is not anſwering;" they have good ſenſe enough to know (even if ſuch things were poſſible) that perſecution is not argument, nor proſecutions proofs.——

I come now to the moſt farſical of all farces, your extraordinary reaſon for the moſt extraordinary delay the South Holland Drainage has met with.——But let us, as uſual, take your own incomparable words.—"*The act for the drainage of the lowlands in South* "*Holland, paſſed in May*, 1793; *but the circumſtances of* "*the times, on account of the war, cauſed heſitation,* "*whether it ſhould be carried into effect, until money and* "*labour became more plentiful.*"——

If this be not as witty as a jeſt-book, it is full as entertaining; for I believe no man has yet read this curious paſſage without a hearty laugh.——That all-accompliſhed writer Mr. M. here tells his readers, that the beginning of a moſt fatally expenſive war, was the time when it was reaſonable to expect that money and labour would become cheaper, and more plentiful. And ſo well ſatisfied was he with this curious mode of reaſoning, that upon the ſtrength of it, he delayed a public work of great conſequence in the year 1793, when money and labour were both plentiful; and poſtponed it until money was ſcarce, and labour dear, beyond all example or precedent!——"*Oh! thou head-of* "*the wrongheads!*"

In

In the ſame paragraph, we find your garbled account of the meeting of 22d September, 1793, for receiving the petitions of the highland proprietors; and of the adjournment to the 28th for the ſame purpoſe.——And this account is meant to anſwer, or rather to explain away my charge againſt you for neglect, in not attending your own appointment on the laſt of thoſe days.——If that charge wanted any proving, it would receive the ſtrongeſt confirmation from what you have advanced in order to confute it.——

Of eighteen pages of nonſenſe, ſcurrility, and falſhood, it muſt be conſidered that this paragraph is the *chef-d'œuvre*:——And indeed, in order to keep out of ſight the plain and ſimple facts I ſtated, the veil of deception is thrown over them with the adroitneſs of an old practitioner.——The tiſſue of falſhood is ſo curiouſly interwoven with extraneous nonſenſe, that without introducing the leaſt particle even of the warpings of truth, the whole texture is ſo completely entangled, as to require much labour to unravel it.——That however ſhall be my taſk; and though laborious, yet I ſhall never think much of my trouble, in correcting Mr. Maxwell's miſtakes, whether they proceed from blundering, or *any other cauſe!*

"*Omnes fuere Labores, quos tibi cepi leves.*"

I always wiſh to take your own incomparable words, but in this inſtance, they are not only incomparable, but they would alſo be ſo incomprehenſible, that I muſt endeavour

endeavour faithfully to abſtract your meaning.—— If I underſtand it, and I am moſt deſirous not to miſtake it, you mean to ſay, that ſome of the petitions were received on the 22d;—that they were immediately given back to the petitioners, to add more names to them; and were to be re-received, with the remaining petitions, on the 28th, to which day you admit the meeting was adjourned; partly for that purpoſe, but principally for another purpoſe, of which more in its place.——This I ſay is falſe.—I deny that any of the petitions were received on the 22d.—But, for the ſake of argument, let us ſuppoſe what you ſay to be ſtrictly true; what does it amount to, but to confirm all I have charged you with?——You have not ſaid, you *dare* not ſay, that *all* the petitions were received on that day:—you ſay the contrary, that only *ſome* of them were ſo received.——If only ſome of them were delivered then, the buſineſs was as incomplete, as if none of them had been received; and it was equally neceſſary to hold the adjourned meeting of the 28th to receive the remainder, as it would have been if none had been delivered.—And conſequently you are obnoxious to all the cenſure I have imputed to you, for your non-attendance on the 28th, when the buſineſs might have been ſo far finiſhed, as to preclude the neceſſity of applying to parliament either to "create new powers," or to "enlarge the old."——You have not ſaid, you dare not venture to ſay, that the petitions were not all *ready* for delivering on the 22d.—You well know the contrary, you well knew at the time, that the petitioners were all in waiting, to deliver them when called for.——

Let

Let us waſte a word or two of plain reaſoning on a ſubject that does not deſerve it.—If, on the 22d, the petitions were not in a complete ſtate of preparation, ready for delivering, they ought not to have been received at all ——And if, as you pretend ſome of them were received; and as you pompouſly ſtate, were "ſtamped, recorded, authenticated, &c." they then became part of your records; they became official depoſits in your hands, which you ought not to have parted with again for a moment, on any pretence whatever.——So that, in order to excuſe a mere neglect, which from their frequency one would imagine you would conſider as an offence only venial, you curiouſly charge yourſelf with a poſitive breach of a ſerious truſt.——I, however, readily acquit you of this charge.——The fact is, that no petitions were thus *regularly* delivered—thus *pompouſly* ſtamped:—or thus *irregularly* given back again, as you have inſinuated on the 22d.——On the contrary, though that was the day appointed for the purpoſe, and you knew the petitioners were in waiting, yet they were not admitted even to the honor of an audience: but a meſſage was ſent out to them, that the meeting for receiving the petitions was adjourned to the 28th, in order to give time for getting more ſignatures to them.——I was one, amongſt ſeveral, who received this meſſage; and, however unpalatable the diſappointment, was obliged to *appear* ſatisfied.——

This, I ſay, was the caſe with many.——I then underſtood, and I have not now the ſlighteſt doubt that it

was

was the caſe with all the petitioners.——We departed then, and attended again on the 28th, when your non-attendance again diſappointed us for ever, as I have formerly ſtated.——I therefore again demand why did you not attend your duty on the 28th, the day of your own appointment and adjournment?——We ſhall preſently ſtate your reaſon from your own pen; and I will then notice it as it deſerves; at preſent, other matter demands my attention.

You confidently ſay, that "*by the attendance of two "Commiſſioners, at a meeting for the purpoſe on 22d Sep-"tember, 1793, the benefit of petitioning was open to the "parties; and that all the petitions that ever came before "the Commiſſioners, were delivered on that day.*"——If this were true, it was becauſe you did not attend to receive the remainder, as you ought to have done on the 28th.——But I ſay it is falſe.——The Fleet petitions, for inſtance, and (if I may credit the evidence of my eyes and ears) ſeveral others, you poſitively refuſed to take on that day, and referred the receiving them to the 28th, and then you did not attend! The Fleet petitions, therefore, to go no further, certainly were not delivered on the 22d.——And yet you cannot pretend to ſay they never came before the Commiſſioners; becauſe, at the end of the paragraph, you expreſsly recognize them, in a manner that will preſently call for a little animadverſion. ——By what new ſhift, by what miſerable ſhuffle, will you do away this plain detected falſhood?——

In order to prove what, being falſe, nothing can

prove; we are again pompouſly referred to thoſe *mighty minutes*, and to a vague recital, in a clumſy clauſe of the Fleet Incloſure Act.——The clauſe ſays nothing of the petitions being received on the 22d;——And as to any thing that may be foiſted into the minutes, to anſwer a purpoſe *ex poſt facto;* when it contradicts the evidence of my own ſenſes, I hold it as cheap as I do Mr. Maxwell's word, or as it has been ſeen he himſelf does his own ſolemn declaration.——But, allowing theſe evidences all the credit you claim for them, what do they prove? that only a *part* of the petitions were ever received at all; whereas, the whole of them might have been, ought to have been, and would have been received, if you had attended your duty, and your own appointment for that purpoſe, on the 28th.——

But we are now told with a degree of *bronze* that has hardly any example, that the adjournment to the 28th had little to do with the petitions;——but was principally for the purpoſe of taking Mr. Hare's opinion and advice, about proceeding further with the execution of the Act, about which you had before ſaid there was heſitation.——To paſs over the abſurdity of *your* taking any man's opinion or advice, who it is well known always follow your own—to paſs over the abſurdity of taking any opinion whatever, whether you was to do your duty or not—though I have the higheſt reſpect for Mr. Hare's opinion and advice; and heartily wiſh that he inſtead of you was the dictator in theſe buſineſſes——Yet ſurely Mr. Hare's opinion might have been known without holding a meeting on purpoſe.——Surely it was unneceſſary

to

to subject the country to TEN POUNDS expense, for what could have been full as well done by a common post letter!——This curious pretence brings strongly to my memory, a well authenticated story, of a church-warden in a neighbouring village, who called a meeting of the inhabitants, and actually spent *ten pounds* in eating and drinking, that he might have an opportunity of taking their advice; whether it were best to splice the old bell rope, or to buy a new one!!——

You appeal to your extraordinary nonentity of a friend, BLANK BLANK, *Esquire*, that, on this occasion, you did not wish to burthen the trust with a needless expense. ——If this be any thing but boasting; why, when you knew that Mr. Hare could not, and that you *would* not attend; why, I say, did you not prevent the meeting entirely?——Why suffer Mr. Walker, and Mr. Saunderson, with his clerk, to attend upon what your non-attendance must render a sleeveless errand?——They really *did* attend, and therefore surely ought to be paid, though for doing nothing.——But it seems you was determined to add one more, to the number of those curious things formerly described, viz. "*A meeting to* "*adjourn, and an adjournment to meet.*"——

I come now to the illiberal, and false manner in which you state what you call my opinion accompanying the Fleet petitions.——It has ever been held a maxim most indisputable, that the man who, pretending to quote the words of another, wilfully misstates them to turn their meaning against the writer; or mutilates them so as to torture

them to "*meaning's never meant;*" is a traducer of the baſeſt, blackeſt die.——How far this rule applies to you let us now enquire.——At the end of the paragraph, page 8, you have dared to print in CAPITALS, as a *marked* quotatition from ſomething you pretend I had written, the following extraordinary ſentence:—"*That the Fleet "Petition ought to be conſidered as ſigned by the majority in "value required, becauſe he had ſigned it as owner of the "Tythes.*"——Can your vanity be ſo extravagant, Sir, as to ſuffer you to imagine, that your credit is ſo high with the public, or mine ſo low, that you could ſucceed in making it believe, that I was capable of writing ſuch contemptible nonſenſe?——Or of giving an opinion, that upon compariſon, would hardly diſgrace one of your own?——I call upon you, and *demand* of you; if you have the leaſt idea of what openneſs, and ingenuouſneſs means, to do me the juſtice of printing THE WHOLE of what I wrote.——Though very ſhort, yet to anſwer a purpoſe, you have thought proper ſtill further to ſhorten it into nonſenſe!——Publiſh THE WHOLE of it; and it will ſerve at once to expoſe the baſeneſs of your conduct; and to ſhew the opinion I really *did* give: that opinion I am ready to maintain againſt much abler lawyers than Mr. M.——It does not follow that it is not law, becauſe you do not underſtand it.——

I may here fairly aſk the reader, if ſuch paltry prevarications; ſuch trumpery traſh; ſuch contemptible cavils; ſuch ſhuffling ſhifts, as I have employed theſe pages in expoſing, ever before fell from the pen of a man

man who calls himſelf a gentleman; and who entertains the inſufferable vanity of thinking himſelf a fine writer? Though he is conſtantly taking abundant pains effectually to ſhew the contrary: if a little acquaintance with grammar, and ſome knowledge of commonly good Engliſh, be neceſſary to conſtitute a fine writer.——I know, Mr. George Maxwell, that you alſo think yourſelf a great lawyer; and I am informed that you anxiouſly ſigh to add the law as a profeſſion to the multiplicity of your other avocations:——Certain it is, you have contrived to wriggle yourſelf into ſome of its beſt profeſſional emoluments, to the heavy deprivation of its regular profeſſors.——Cannot you be ſatisfied with its profeſſional profits, without languiſhing alſo for its profeſſional honors?——

In this reſpect you are ſtimulated by two errors, which it is natural for ſuch gentry as you to imbibe; you firſt miſtake a fond anxiety for genius and ability; and then ſuppoſe that a propenſity to quirks and quibbles, have quite qualified you for the ſcience!——Alas! Sir, let me once more ſet you right.——To make even a *bad* lawyer, much more is neceſſary, beſides the arts, the quirps, the quibbles, the cavils, the fineſſe, and the tricks you ſeem to value yourſelf upon.——With the compoſition of a *good* lawyer they are totally incompatible. ——I know many gentlemen in that profeſſion of worth, honor, ability, and integrity.——But I do not know one of that deſcription, who does not deteſt a pun, a quibble, a ſhuffle, and a cavil, as much as you delight

in

in them.——Quit therefore a vain purſuit; and think no more of a ſcience for which indeed you are not qualified.

" *Ex quovis ligneo, non fit Mercurius.*"

At page 10, ſpeaking of me and the Fleet Incloſure, you ſay;——" Had he been able to *mould me to his* " *purpoſe*, we might (notwithſtanding the many crimes " I had previouſly committed, according to his account) " have continued on ſuch terms, &c. "——Oh! thou fabricator of falſe inſinuations,

" *Throw off this dark, ambiguous, ſhuffling phraſe;*
" *And let your Oracle be underſtood.*"——

be for once open, and honeſt: ſay to *what purpoſe* did I want to *mould* you; or by what means did I attempt to affect my purpoſe.——I invite the explanation; I cannot fear it.

——————" Let the gall'd horſe go wince,
" Our Withers are unwrung."——

If you had regarded your own ſolemn promiſe, which I heard from your own mouth, when you was appointed a Commiſſioner, " *That you would allot the common in the* " *beſt manner you could, and with all poſſible expedition.*" ——If you had paid a proper regard to the *reſpectful requiſition* of a very large majority of the commoners and proprietors, in the early part of the buſineſs; a copy of which I have inſerted in the margin*: If, in other words,

* COPY.

" To George Maxwell, Edward Hare, and John Walker,
" Gentlemen, Commiſſioners appointed in and by an Act of
" Parliament lately paſſed, for dividing, alloting, and incloſing
" certain

words, you had done what was plainly, and indiſputably your duty; no fault would have been found with your conduct.——This is the only purpoſe which either the Proprietors or I ever wiſhed to *mould* you to.——But to a man predetermined *not* to do his duty, this was certainly provocation enough to excite his anger.——If your dark inſinuation mean any thing elſe, out with it! ſpeak plainly!——

Upon this ſubject, as alſo concerning a certain moſt illiberal paper, to which the ſignatures of a few reſpectable men were obtained, in a manner moſt ſhamefully diſgraceful, I would gladly add a few words; but I muſt refrain, as I will not anticipate the contents of the intended hiſtory of theſe buſineſſes, in which nothing ſhall be omitted:——There every thing ſhall be explained; and all your conduct and miſconduct, carefully traced "*Ab ovo, uſque ad* MALA."——

" certain Commons, Droves, and Waſte Lands, in the Pariſh " of Fleet, in the County of Lincoln.

" WE whoſe names are hereunto ſubſcribed, being owners of " Common Rights in the ſaid Pariſh of Fleet: do hereby make " our earneſt, and reſpectful Requiſition to the ſaid Com- " miſſioners, that they will proceed immediately to carry the " ſaid Act into full Execution, by ſetting out and allotting the " ſaid Commons, Droves, and Waſte Lands purſuant to the " Directions of the ſaid Act.

Dated Fleet the 13th Day of October, 1794."

N. B. The above earneſt and reſpectful requiſition was ſigned by the lords of three manors, out of four; the rector, patron, and impropriator, of all the tythes; and by a large majority of the common right owners: and copies of it, ſo ſigned, were delivered to all the commiſſioners.——Yet all this (thanks to Mr. M's perſevering obſtinacy) has produced—— NOTHING!!

Your

Your "literal ſtate," as you call it, of your polite converſation at Spalding, requires but little notice.——All the extenuations, the gloſſes, and the additions, are *literally* falſe.——But as it does not contradict any thing I ſtated, I let it paſs without farther comment.——Mr. Hare had occaſion to ſay a very few words that day; but it was in ſo mild, ſo handſome, and gentlemanlike a manner, that it would have required a mind as illiberal as your own, to have been diſpleaſed with him.

It is a ſtanding rule with ſuch beſpatterers as Mr. Maxwell——"throw but dirt enough, and ſome of it "will ſtick."——Under the ſanction of this maxim, you venture to charge me with being a general defamer.——Here, however, your dirty rule will deceive you. The charge comes without one ſingle proof to ſupport it; and I defy you or any other man to produce one.——The ſhaft that has only your ſimple allegation to ſharpen its venomed point, muſt fall blunted to the ground.——I feel no apprehenſions, that a character, which I truſt is eſtabliſhed amongſt my neighbours, by a reſidence in this vicinity from my birth, more than fifty years, is in any danger, from the mere *Ipſe dixit* of a man, whom leſs than two years reſidence amongſt us has made ſo VERY POPULAR.!——

I am now to anſwer another terrible charge of meddling with your private concerns.——You feel yourſelf unpopular amongſt a "numerous tenantry;" and you wiſh to inſinuate that I have made you ſo.——Poor man!—You will obtain juſt as much credit for the *pretended* cauſe,

as

as you will get pity for the *certain* effect:——If you are unpopular amongſt the Tenants, it is your own conduct that has made you ſo, and not any thing that has been ſaid about it.—Was Mr. Philip Aſhley unpopular amongſt them?——Could any thing have made him ſo, but an alteration in his excellent conduct?——If you are not popular, nothing will make you ſo but changing your behaviour.——A POPULAR TYRANT! would, indeed, be a BLACK SWAN.——"*Rara avis in terris.*"——

But it ſeems to be your opinion that a man muſt not interfere in any thing that does not concern his own property.——This maxim is indeed worthy ſo great a lawyer, and ſo able a caſuiſt.——Let us ſee what it tends to prove, by a caſe in point, as you lawyers term it.——"A ſtands by, and ſees B oppreſs, injure, rob, "or plunder C.—But as B does not meddle with the "purſe or pocket of A, he has nothing to do with the "matter!"——Oh moſt excellent arguer!——Moſt upright judge!——Thou ſecond Daniel!——"*Eris* "*mihi magnus Apollo!*"——

If this be really your opinion, and if not very lately taken up, why did it not prevent your interfering in my private concerns, ſo far as to labour to tranſfer part of my eſtate, to be the property of ſtrangers, with which you had no buſineſs, and in which you could have no intereſt, but the gratifying a malice as much without excuſe, as it was without provocation? This was the firſt *open* proof of your rancour againſt me; which of

us, therefore, is beſt warranted in complaining of our private concerns being attacked?——

But, Sir, in your capacity as ſervant, ſteward, or, as you are pleaſed pompouſly to ſtile yourſelf, AGENT to the landlord of ſuch a "numerous tenantry," I am far from conſidering you as a private man, or your conduct or miſconduct as a private matter.——If the effects were even confined ſtrictly to thoſe tenants, yet the number of them ſo oſtentatiouſly glanced at, effectually militates againſt the idea.——But the evil does *not* ſtop there; other land owners may, and ſome I underſtand have, under the ſame advice and aſſiſtance adopted the ſame oppreſſive and ruinous plan: and it is impoſſible to ſay how far its wide-ſpreading, deſolating effects may extend.——

By way of apology for your conduct, you ſay, "*It* "*was owing to my advice, that the rents in queſtion were* "*not raiſed, as they now are, ſo long ago as the year* 1790." ——Theſe words may be read by many, they will be credited by none.——If they were, what would they prove? That in the year 1790, when times being good, lands might have borne ſome raiſing; you prevented it then, and wiſely, cunningly, and humanely cauſed it to be deferred to the year 1797; an epoch of ſuch unprecedented depreſſion, as to render raiſing almoſt ſynonymous with ruin.——Admirable reaſoner!—— Happy apologiſt!——

Let

Let us return once more to your beautiful and *grammatical* language.——" *Whether the Eſtate alluded* " *to, is above the preſent times, and the general run of* " *other people's lands in the ſame pariſhes; let thoſe determine* " *who are maſters of the ſubject.*"——Sir, they have long ſince fully determined that queſtion, very differently to your idea of it.——The words with which you wind up the paragraph, about me and the pariſh of Fleet, are too curious not to be quoted.——" *Indeed he has given* " *it under his own hand, that he would not be ſatisfied,* " *unleſs the pariſh was valued at nearly double the rent that* " *this eſtate is now let at.*"——This is another of thoſe unneceſſary, wanton *gratis* falſities, with which this conſtellation of untruths is ſo richly ornamented, as it is totally unfounded, and has no connection with any thing I ever wrote, ſpoke, or thought.——When I call it a " wanton falſity," I might be juſtified in giving it a ſtill harſher and more appropriate title.——But I will not throw water upon a drowned rat.

I cannot part from this ſubject without lamenting, and I am ſure every good man will join me in doing ſo, that ſome of the odium of this buſineſs, may probably attach to a man, poſſeſſed of one of the beſt of human hearts. I mean your mild, generous, humane, and noble-minded maſter.——I had the honor of knowing him long before he knew you; and from the knowledge of his excellent heart, I run no hazard in ſaying, that, if he did not now labour under the unhappieſt of all deprivations, his humane and generous ſoul would ſpurn at the idea of a needleſs augmentation, to one of the

moſt ſplendid incomes in Europe; eſpecially as that augmentation is to be wrung from the hard-earned pittance of the once happy tenantry that then adored him.——The recollection of what I once knew him, brings with it a truly melancholy pleaſure: and I can ſcarcely refrain from applying, with little alteration, the words of our accompliſhed poet.

" Seen him I have, but in his happier hour
" Of ſocial joy, without a wiſh for power:
" Seen him uncumber'd with the venal tribe,
" Smile without art, and win without a bribe."——

There is another occaſion on which you moſt miſerably miſrepreſented this amiable man; I mean the late expected oppoſition for this county, and I allude to the arbitrary and tyrannic manner, in which his tenants were *commanded* to vote; and even to narrow (that is in fact to ſurrender part of) their rights as Britiſh freeholders. ——This deſpotic mandate was much better adapted to vaſſals under the vile feudal ſyſtem, than to the free tenants of a generous and noble-minded Engliſh landlord; and I am perſuaded, could not be countenanced or ſanctioned by his directions.——I once had the honor, and I may ſay the pleaſure (for a pleaſure he really made it) of canvaſſing with him, a rich and populous part of a county, for which he was himſelf a candidate, and from which he had before met with very unkind and ungrateful conduct: but, though feeling, as every ingenuous mind muſt, the ſharp ſting of unmerited and ungrateful treatment, even that did not

not betray him into haſty or unpleaſant returns. All was mild, manly, open, generous, and liberal.——In caſes where *you* would have thought him entitled to command, he condeſcended to ſolicit, and that in a polite and handſome manner. And he rather choſe to loſe his election, than to do or permit any thing illiberal and improper.

What he would not do, or ſuffer to be done, in his own caſe, it is reaſonable to conclude, he would not approve of in that of any other candidate, however reſpectable: and I have the fulleſt conviction, that he would have felt himſelf extremely indignant, if he had known at the time, that his name or influence was uſed in a manner ſo illegal, illiberal, and unconſtitutional. ——I cannot here mean the ſlighteſt diſreſpect to the worthy candidate alluded to, ſince it is well known I intended voting for him myſelf.——And I am proud of having, on this occaſion, an opportunity of telling you, Mr. George Maxwell, that many of the freeholders, amongſt thoſe pariſhioners whom you have painted me as wiſhing to "ſteal a march upon," in order to cheat and injure, in the handſomeſt and moſt reſpectful manner offered to vote as I ſhould wiſh them.—— I can appeal to them, that with proper acknowledgments for ſuch civility, I only told them for whom I ſhould vote, but deſired that might not put them under any reſtraint: as I did not, nor ever will attempt to influence thoſe ſuffrages, which ought to be perfectly free and unbiaſſed.——

You

You ſay "I ſomewhere hint at my declining age." This is another of thoſe wanton falſities which crowd this performance. I defy you to point out where thoſe hints are to be found.——Though I am afflicted with heavy infirmities, the ſevere relics of a long and painful viſitation, which render life in many reſpects uncomfortable, but do not tend to ſhorten it; yet the ſtrong and happy conſtitution heaven bleſt me with, and I hope I may add, the conſequences of a life in no ſlight degree regular, temperate, ſedentary, and abſtemious, after ſupporting me through dreadful ſufferings, have left me (I thank God!) in poſſeſſion of a ſtate of health unuſually and almoſt uninterruptedly good.—— Under ſuch circumſtances, if, though upwards of fifty, I could utter a hint of repining or complaint; it would ſhew a degree of ingratitude towards that Providence I adore with humble reverence, which I can truly ſay I am incapable of.——The falſhood of charging me with it, was reſerved for Mr. George Maxwell.—— This falſe inſinuation is followed by a miſerable meſs of SECOND HAND morality; which as it was not written by you, nor can be tortured into the moſt diſtant application to me, I need take no further notice of.——

You appeal to your friend in embrio, *'ſquire blank*, that you have *ſtaggered* my facts: you do not venture to ſay you have confuted them.——I appeal to the good ſenſe of the impartial, if you have even ſtaggered one of thoſe facts, unleſs your old habit of ſubſtituting falſhood in their place may be called ſo?——

Having

Having now laboured through all the dull heavy ſtupidity of the context, I will return to the light frothy wit of the title page.——

It ſeems, about three years ago, a ſerious letter, with a ludicrous ſignature, was addreſſed to a neighbouring gentleman.——Without the ſlighteſt particle of proof, without the remoteſt reaſon, you are pleaſed to ſuppoſe me the author of the letter; merely that you may exerciſe the uſual brilliancy of your wit, in adapting the ſignature as a nick-name.——I will only ſay, as I have it from the beſt authority, that the gentleman to whom it was addreſſed, does not conſider me as the author, I have nothing to do with your impudence, inſolence, and impertinence about it.——

Whatever demerit may attach to the author of that letter, there can be but one opinion about your wanton cruelty to the gentleman it was addreſſed to, in thus reviving the remembrance of it, at this unlucky time, after three years of oblivion had kindly ſhrouded it from obſervation.——It was ſhewn to me at Spalding ſoon after its publication; I recollect the contents were ſuch as that gentleman and his friends would ſurely wiſh to be forgotten; at leaſt, not to be revived at this unfortunate moment.——No man, therefore (except yourſelf) has ſo much cauſe to be angry with you, as that gentleman, for thus wantonly raking up from its aſhes the remembrance of that letter, at a time which unhappily forces it upon the recollection of its readers, not only as a prophecy, but alſo as a prophecy literally fulfilled.——Such is the

fort

ſort of kindneſs which that gentleman has met with, and which the reſt of a "a numerous tenantry" expect, from the tender, accomodating, merciful, and compaſſionate man, who, with farcical pompoſity, writes himſelf "AGENT TO THEIR LANDLORD."——

Before I conclude, I muſt again ſay, that, though I will reply to whatever you pleaſe to addreſs to me by my name, and ſign with your own; I do not intend to notice any more of your anonymous nonſenſe.——It therefore depends upon circumſtances whether I ſhall addreſs you again before I publiſh the Hiſtory of the Fleet Incloſure and South Holland Drainage. A hiſtory that I think will not leave a doubt how far you merit the titles you wiſh to be diſtinguiſhed by, of the greateſt ſurveyor; the ableſt engineer; the moſt accurate calculator; and the moſt diligent Commiſſioner in England!——

If, in the interim, I ſhould have occaſion to pay my reſpects to you; I may probably, by way of harbinger to that hiſtory, treat "the public in general, and *your* "*numerous friends* in particular," with ſome curious anecdotes on the following ſubjects, viz.—The Wandon, Eaton-Socon, and Barrington Incloſures.——The Catworth Incloſure.——The *Norriſian Purchaſe* in that pariſh.——Mr. N—v—le T—l—ſ—n's* public converſation

* This gentleman, at a public meeting, honored Mr. Maxwell with ſeveral expreſſive appellations, full as polite, and even more pointed and appropriate, than thoſe in which Mr. M. is himſelf a *wholeſale dealer*.——Mr. M's. uſual rage on ſuch occaſions

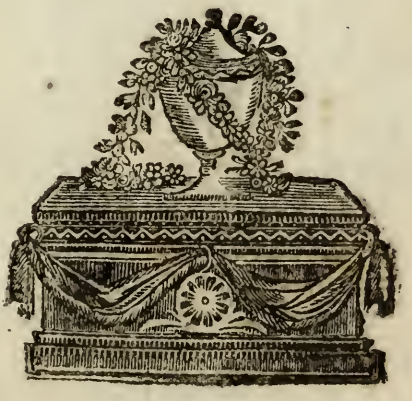
verſation with you on that occaſion.——Your condeſcending politeneſs in conſequence, &c. &c. &c.——

Theſe hints will require no explaining to you.—— There is ſomething within, that will tell you more than SEVEN WATCHMEN ON A TOWER!——

I am, &c.

JAMES ASHLEY.

FLEET RECTORY,

September the 10*th*, 1797.

Paſſion was in this caſe of very ſhort duration; and was preſently ſucceeded by ſo meek and chriſtian-like a ſpirit, that he quickly offered Mr. T. the hand of peace and reconciliation! ——WHY?——Not becauſe Mr. T. either recanted, or apologized.——But for a much better reaſon; becauſe, being called upon to explain, he inſtantly complied: and moſt ſatisfactorily ſhewed, that Mr. M. was fully entitled to all the diſtinctions he had honored him with.——